tinued to be linked with the crop loans. It also recommended that a separate scheme for non-loanee farmers may be framed to be operated on experimental basis, at an appropriate time.

(iii) *Covering of framing even in remote and distant place.*—The Group has not made any recommendation in this regard because the CCIS is already applicable in any area of an implementing State, notified under the scheme.

2. The Government has considered these suggestions and decided that no other crop should be covered under the CCIS for the time being. The recommendation of the Group to cover the non-loanee farmers on experimental basis under the CCIS was also considered by the Government but was not found feasible for implementation at present.

Availability of Graphite ore in Tamil Nadu

*277. PASUMPON THA KIRUTTINAM: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Graphite ore is abundantly available in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Prime Minister had recently laid the foundation of a Graphite ore project; and

(d) if so, the details of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) and (b) The Graphite occurrences in Tamil Nadu are mainly in Sivaganga Taluk of Pasumpon Muthuramalingam district with a reserve of 2,20,000 tonnes and in Tirumangalam Taluk of Madurai district with a reserve of 17,500 tonnes.

(c) The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of the 'Sivaganga' Graphite Project on the 26th October, 1988.

(d) The project anvisages processing of 200 tonnes of Graphite ore per day for production of 28 tonnes of 96-99 fixed carbon.

Vijayanagar Steel Plant

*278. SHRI J. P. JAVALI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have sent fresh proposals on the long-pending Vijayanagar Steel Plant to the National Development Council for its clearance;

(b) if so, what is the estimated cost of the project; and

(c) whether the project would be completed during the Eighth Five Year Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Loans and grants to States for construction of houses for weaker sections

*279. SHRI PRITHIBI MAJHI: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any amount has been given as block loans and block grants to the States during the last three years for construction of low cost houses in rural areas for the economically weaker sections; and

(b) if so, the amount given to Assam during the above period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) The Union Government provides central assistance for State Plans in the form of block loans and block grants, but this is not linked to any particular Scheme/Programme/Project. However, the distribution of central assistance amongst different sectors including housing in rural areas for weaker sections is finalised by the State Governments/UT Administrations on the basis of annual plan discussions.